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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Intelligence Community Staff

19 JUL 1976

IC 76-2340

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence

FROM:

[redacted]
Acting Chief, Production Assessment
and Improvement Division

SUBJECT:

Initial Reader Reaction to the New NID
Cable

1. [redacted] of this division recently completed an informal survey of the reaction to the new National Intelligence Daily (NID) Cable of selected recipients (using a random sampling approach). The survey included elements within CIA, DIA, NSA and the services. Its purpose was to determine reader acceptance of the NID Cable and its usefulness as a daily intelligence document. There was no attempt to investigate "procedural" factors such as coordination, distribution, etc.

Principal Findings of the Survey

2. Before discussing the few criticisms that have surfaced, I would note that the readers of the NID Cable are seeing about 80 percent of the articles that appear in the NID. While some articles are not carried in the Cable because of classification, there are still other reports that are omitted for unknown reasons. Especially unfortunate is the absence of the special feature by-line articles in the Cable (usually prepared by CIA). While some exceed the classification limits of the Cable, the majority do not. (See attachment for a listing of NID by-line articles from 12-29 May). We find all NID work to be generally palatable and the

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signed articles to be particularly useful. Even though many appear in CIA's Weekly Review, we would still encourage their inclusion in the Cable if only in a shortened and sanitized form.

3. What follows is a listing of those reader comments which, in our view, appear to merit attention by the NID Staff.

a. The Cable has no table of contents or summary, and the reader has no idea of what is in the report until he scans each article. Additionally, some components desire an indication of those items having special significance which they might highlight for their own readers.

b. Listing only the "country" in the title makes the NID Cable a difficult piece for information storage and retrieval. Subtitles in the NID ease reference coding and retrieval by issues and events. In contrast, the NID Cable becomes a perishable product unless a component takes the step of coding on the internals of the text.

4. Several other nuisance problems have been reported that we consider the agencies should solve themselves.

a. The Cable tends to get buried with other routine traffic and the reporting no longer enjoys the selective status it had in the previous magazine format of the National Intelligence Bulletin.

b. The Cable has much less impact on the reader and, in its present format, is not as readable or as useful as the discontinued NIB. Despite this, some offices report that the Cable adequately serves their purpose.

c. The Cable offers very poor quality for reproducing xerox copies. This affects those elements that still rely on the Cable for daily briefing support and those elements which have wide internal distribution. (CIA, with its printed copies, does not have this problem. Even there, however, we find the Cable rates less attention than the old NIB.)

d. The absence of a page format with graphics is an inconvenience for those elements which depend on CIA's current intelligence publication for daily briefing support.

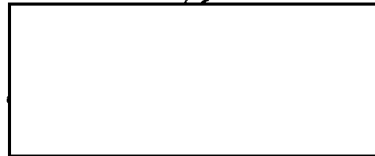
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Recommendations

5. These comments are a summary of initial reader reactions. Some problems will fade as time elapses and as other arrangements are made by those elements which rely on CIA's current intelligence reports for daily briefing support. The more meaningful complaints can be answered by rather minor changes affecting the readability and utility of the report. We would endorse heartily a table of contents in each Cable; an expansion of the titles of each article, similar to those in the NID; an indicator of priority or special concern and significance; and the inclusion in the Cable of most NID articles, in toto or in gist.



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Attachment:

NID Feature By-line Articles,
12-29 May 1976

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Distribution:

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DCI/IC/PAID/ 12 Jul 76

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18 May 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED] PAID

SUBJECT: Comparison of the NID and NID Cable, 12-17 May 1976

1. So far, the reader of the NID Cable apparently is not being shortchanged very much in comparison to the readers of the NID. More than 70 percent of the NID articles during this period were also carried in the Cable, and nearly all Cable items were identical to those in the NID. Nearly all changes in the Cable items reflected only minor editorial improvements.

2. However I did find three noteworthy substantive changes. In the lead item of the NID Cable of 15 May, the editors changed the optimism in the NID concerning the latest ceasefire in Lebanon, so that the judgment read that "the agreement is unlikely to be effective." The NID item had stressed that the ceasefire seemed to be taking hold in key areas. In the same item, the NID attributed to Yasir Arafat feelings of anger over Syrian intervention, whereas the NID Cable attributed them to Fatah as a whole--surely not the same thing. The third change concerned the 17 May coverage of Cuban-Jamaican relations. An (apparently) important paragraph in the NID dealing with several recent examples of Jamaican-Cuban collaboration in security matters was deleted from the Cable, even though the classification of both versions was identical--SECRET NOFORN.

3. Only three NID articles clearly could not be carried in the Cable because of classification problems: one concerning Yugoslavia on 12 May; a 13 May article on Soviet journalists; and the 15 May treatment of Soviet covert communications. Most of the NID articles not carried in the Cable apparently were kept out because of their length rather than their classification. In this category I list:

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4. The application of classification terms is not uniform. One possible source of confusion is that the NID Cable uses both [redacted] [redacted] to cover both controls. The separate classification or paragraphs in the NID Cable makes the articles more difficult to read, but the information perhaps easier to use. As an example of the latter quality, the 15 May NID item on the [redacted] agreement to resume diplomatic relations is classified SECRET [redacted] whereas the NID Cable is UNCLASSIFIED. Had the NID item been classified by paragraphs, it would have been readily apparent to any reader that only the probable timing of the resumption of relations--a relatively minor aspect of the story--was based on classified information. In addition I am puzzled as to why the same article on [redacted] on 15 May was classified [redacted] [redacted] unless there was something extraordinarily sensitive in the NID's identification of [redacted]."

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25X1 5. Some readers of the NID Cables may lament the absence of photographs and maps. The photographs accompanying the NID articles during the last days of [] showed a man obviously very ill, and thereby added an impact which the articles themselves were unable to convey. The photographs accompanying articles on Brezhnev are useful for clarifying the state of his health. But for the period covered in this survey, I think the contributions made by maps and photos were no more than peripheral.

6. Finally, the NID Cables do not offer the reader anything in the title except the country. As a consequence there may be three or four different articles in a given Cable headed simply "USSR." This practice makes the NID Cable more perishable than the NID; the Cable editors offer no assistance to those concerned with information storage and retrieval. Reprinting the entire NID headline in the Cable would take care of this problem.

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4	<i>[unclear]</i>		
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WANKS
Please take necessary action

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COMMENT	FILE	RETURN
CONCURRENCE	INFORMATION	SIGNATURE

Remarks:

Attached is a memo I sent to Bill Parmenter concerning the informal survey [redacted] conducted on reader reaction to the new cable version of the NID. In addition to noting principal findings, minor recommendations were also provided--suggestions which would, in our view, improve the readability and utility of the NID Cable.

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